

Knowledge Management (KM)

What is it?

Field Manual 3-0, Operations, defines Knowledge Management (KM) as the art of creating, organizing, applying, and transferring knowledge to facilitate situational understanding and decision making. KM supports improving organizational learning, innovation and performance. KM processes ensure that knowledge products and services are relevant, accurate, timely, and useable to commanders and decision makers. Knowledge management has three major components:

- People—those inside and outside the organization who create, organize, share, and use knowledge, and the leaders who foster an adaptive, learning environment.
- Processes—the methods to create, capture, organize and apply knowledge.
- Technology—information systems that help collect, process, store and display knowledge. Technology helps put knowledge products and services into organized frameworks.

The Army recently issued a new FM 6-01.1, *Knowledge Management Section*, which expands the doctrinal principles of FM 3-0, *Operations*, and provides tactics, techniques and procedures necessary to effectively integrate KM into operational units.

What has Army Aviation done?

The U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence (USAACE) has instituted several KM initiatives. Listed here is a summary of those efforts to date:

- People - The current USAACE KM Office is built around a six-person TDA structure and occupies office space in Bldg. 101, Room 129. The TRADOC KM Office has initiated direct work with the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) G-8 to resource our existing structure and potentially expand our authorizations to nine, which will enable personnel support for the U.S. Army Aviation Logistics School (USAALS) at Fort Eustis and the Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Training Battalion (UASTB) at Fort Huachuca. The USAACE KM Office is currently working multiple efforts to train, inform, and educate the USAACE community on KM concepts and practices as part of their emerging USAACEKM Support Plan.
- Processes – Much of the knowledge of USAACE is tacit (unwritten) in nature supported by an individual's own unique data storage protocols. Most individuals save files on their individual computers or in "analog" binders. The primary information transfer tool is Microsoft Outlook. A few organizations have "shared drives" but those drives, for the most part, are not shared outside confined organization boundaries. While technical processes exist to share tacit knowledge, i.e., e-mail, an overall effective and efficient process to capture explicit knowledge (documented) or enable more tacit knowledge awareness is lacking. Some inroads have been made in collaboration efforts, but much work remains. The USAACE KM Office is currently working multiple efforts to identify, codify, share and enhance staff processes as part of its emerging USAACEKM Support Plan.
- Technology – USAACE's current KM efforts will utilize tools provided through our desktop personal computers. MS Office 2007, coupled with MS Outlook, provides the core technical capability for day-to-day knowledge capture and transfer. Common levels of service, such as establishment and support for "shared drives," from our Network Enterprise Center-Rucker (NEC), formerly known as the Directorate of Information Management (DOIM), enable local levels of information

exchange and collaboration. Another area that is receiving renewed interest is the utilization of free Army enterprise capabilities like Army Knowledge Online (AKO), Defense Connect Online (DCO) and Battle Command Knowledge System (BCKS). The demand to have a secure capability using the Secure Internet Protocol Router (SIPR) is increasing. The USAACE KM Office is currently working efforts to train, inform and educate the USAACE community on these tools as part of their emerging USAACEKM Support Plan.

What continued efforts does Army Aviation have planned for the future?

The USAACE KM Office will continue applying maximum effort and resources towards executing their mission for developing, implementing, and sustaining an Aviation KM environment and culture that effectively and efficiently harnesses the critical relationship between people, process, and technology in creating, applying, organizing, and transferring knowledge to support timely decision making activities. This synergistic knowledge management capability enables and supports the achievement of Aviation Branch readiness goals and objectives for the operating and generating forces. Key developmental areas will focus on supporting IMT/PME, ARFORGEN and Capability Development/Futures.

Why is this important to the Army and Army Aviation?

Army Aviation has proven itself a critical force multiplier. Institutional training of aviation officers, warrant officers, NCOs and Soldiers needed to sustain such a force is both demanding and challenging, and Army Aviation operations are becoming increasingly more complex. Our requirement to “know what we know” vice “we don’t know what we know” is rising. Reductions in personnel allocations create a need to replace informal knowledge with formal access methods such as virtual teaming through collaboration and networking. The amount of experience and acquired knowledge is out there for people who understand how to access and exploit such a resource across the network in a collaborative manner. Early retirements and increasing mobility of the work force lead to loss of knowledge. Ongoing pressure to reduce the size of the personnel structure will require us to improve our ability to capture the valuable knowledge before it “walks out the door.”

POC: Mr. Wade Becnel
Chief, Knowledge Management
wade.becnel@us.army.mil
334-255-0856
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